

REMARKS

The Office Action of July 31, 2006 has been carefully reviewed and these remarks are responsive thereto. Claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 15, 17, 23, and 25 have been amended. Claims 7, 8, 19-21, 24 and 26 have been withdrawn. Reconsideration of the application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested. Each of the Examiner's rejections is discussed below.

Species Election

The Office Action states that the application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species:

Species I. Figs. 1-5;

Species II. Figs. 6-7;

Species III. Figs. 9 and 14;

Species IV. Figs. 12, 13, and 15;

The requirement for an election is respectfully traversed. As required, applicant hereby provisionally elects Species I, directed toward Figs. 1-5. At least claims 1-6, 9-18, 22, 23, 25 and 27 are all readable on Figs. 1-5.

Section 102

Claims 1-6, 25 and 27

Claims 1-6, 25, and 27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 3,833,053 to Pritchard et al. ("Pritchard"). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claims 25 and 27 have been canceled.

Pritchard discloses an inflatable pad 10 having compartments 28 extending transversely across pad 10. An elongated pocket 12 extends along the longitudinal axis of pad 10, and a strap 16 extends through pocket 12.

Pritchard fails to disclose or make obvious a bladder having a plurality of transverse chambers, with the longitudinal axis of each transverse chamber being disposed at an acute angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of the bladder, as required by independent claims 1 and 25.

The transverse chambers in Pritchard, as recognized in the Office Action, extend substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the bladder.

Accordingly, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Claim 9

Claim 9 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No.6,644,522 to Preiss (“Preiss”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Preiss fails to disclose or make obvious a bladder including a plurality of transverse chambers, with each chamber having a longitudinal axis disposed at an acute angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of the bladder, as required by independent claim 9.

Preiss simply fails to disclose the required transverse chambers at an acute angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of the bladder.

Accordingly, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Claims 9 and 22

Claims 9 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,566,871 to Weintraub (“Weintraub”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Weintraub fails to disclose or make obvious a bladder including a plurality of transverse chambers, with each chamber having a longitudinal axis disposed at an acute angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of the bladder, as required by independent claim 9.

Weintraub simply fails to disclose the required transverse chambers at an acute angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of the bladder.

Accordingly, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Section 103

Claims 10-12, 14-17, and 23

Claims 10-12, 14-17, and 23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Preiss in view of Pritchard. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As noted above, Preiss and Pritchard fail to disclose or make obvious a bladder including a plurality of transverse chambers, with each chamber having a longitudinal axis disposed at an acute angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of the bladder, as required by independent claim 9.

Additionally, Preiss and Pritchard fail to disclose or make obvious a bladder having a plurality of elongate transverse apertures, with each transverse aperture having a longitudinal axis extending at an acute angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of the bladder, as required by independent claim 23.

Accordingly, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Claim 13

Claim 13 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Preiss in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,094,014 to Schroeder (“Schroeder”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Schroeder fails to overcome the deficiencies of Preiss discussed above with respect to claim 9. Specifically, Schroeder does not disclose or make obvious a bladder including a plurality of transverse chambers, with each chamber having a longitudinal axis disposed at an acute angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of the bladder.

Accordingly, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claim 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Since independent claim 9 is believed to be allowable in its present form, as discussed above, claim 18 is believed to be allowable in its present form as well.

Conclusion

Pending claims 1-6, 9-18, 22, 23, 25, and 27 are believed to be in form for allowance, and in indication to that effect is respectfully requested. Examination of withdrawn claims 7, 8, 19-21, 24, and 26 is respectfully requested at this time. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to **Deposit Account No. 19-0733**.

Respectfully submitted,

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